INZICHTSBODE

Vipassanā-Sāra

Inclusive an interview with the Ven. P.K.K. Mettavihari and information about the new temple/meditation centre in Amsterdam.

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Photograph, taken at the birthday of the Ven. P.K.K. Mettavihari in the 'Buddhavihara' temple in Amsterdam, July 21st 1991.

โครงการสร้างวัดพุทธศาสนาด้วยศิลปกรรม แบบตะวันออกในประเทศเนเธอร์แลนด์

ในประเทศเนเธอร์แลนด์ มีชาวพุทธพำนักอาศัยอยู่หลายเชื้อชาติ ซึ่งมีวัฒนธรรมเดิมของตน ในการนับถือพระพุทธศาสนาที่แตกต่างกัน นอกจากชาวดัทช์ที่นับถือพระพุทธศาสนาในประเทศเนเธอร์แลนด์แล้ว ยังมีชาวพุทธจีน ไทย เวียตนามและธิเบตอีกด้วย

ในปัจจุบัน ได้มีศูนย์พระพุทธศาสนาในประเทศหลายแห่งด้วยกัน ที่พุทธศาสนิกชนสามารถจะไปบำเพ็ญศาสนกิจของตนได้ถนัด ตามกำลังศรัทธาความเชื่อถือ ตลอดจนถึงการเจริญวิปัสสนากัมมัฏฐาน

ในบรรดาศูนย์พระพุทธศาสนาเหล่านี้ วัดพุทธวิหารแห่งนครอัมสเตอร์ดัม นับว่าเป็นศูนย์ใหญ่ที่สำคัญแห่งหนึ่ง ซึ่งอยู่ภายใต้การนำของเจ้าอาวาส พระครูไกรสรวิลาส (เมตตาวิหารีเถระ) ถึงอย่างนั้นก็ยังไม่มีการสร้างวัดด้วยศิลปกรรมในรูปแบบวัดพระพุทธศาสนาสักแห่งเดียว ถ้าหากได้สร้างวัดด้วยศิลปวัฒนธรรมแบบตะวันออกที่เหมาะสมแล้ว ก็จะเป็นที่เชิดชูเกียรติและศรัทธาของชาวพุทธตามความเชื่อถือได้ดียิ่ง

ฉะนั้น หากท่านที่มีจิตศรัทธา ประสงค์จะบริจาคสร้างวัดไทย ได้โปรดติดต่อที่-

วัดพุทธวิหาร

籌建〝荷蘭東方藝術佛寺〞

荷蘭有好多信仰不同法門佛教善信：荷蘭人、中國人、泰國人、越南人和西藏人等。各種族都有各自傳統文化。

今日，荷蘭許多佛教中心，諸善信都可依照信仰，從事種種佛教活動，甚至修行。(毗鉢舍那甘瑪譚)

〞佛陀威限〞佛寺是阿姆斯特丹重要佛寺之一，現住持是很得尊重的〞比丘皆梭拉威叻〞(默禾威哈里提臘) 主持一切。

儘管如此，尚未見有〝純粹東方藝術〞的佛寺。

設若能有可觀的純東方藝術佛寺的話，當更能表現善信信仰佛教，弘揚佛教精神。

因此，信仰佛教的中國善信，將此計劃向住持稟告，俾在阿姆斯特丹市區，或郊區興建此佛寺。

目前，籌得的基金，夠買建佛寺所需地皮，首要應先找到適當的地點。

緣此，將情向諸位善信報信，倘樂意支援此計劃，敬請和〞佛陀威限佛寺〞連絡。

The new temple, the front side



วัดพุทธวิหาร ที่ซื้อใหม่ในเขตลานส์เมียร์ ของอัมสเตอร์ดัมเหนือ

aktiviteiten, zoals weekends en retraites.
Nu is dan eindelijk een mooi pand gevonden, aan de rand van Amsterdam in het dorpje den Ilp (gem. Landsmeer). Het pand, een voormalige boerderij in Zaanse stijl met diverse schuren, een park en een botenhuis, is uniek en idyllisch gelegen aan het water en grenst aan natuurgebied *'t Twiske*. Door de royale afmetingen van de boerderij en de grote oppervlakte grond (3210 m) zijn er erg veel mogelijkheden. Er is echter één punt waar nog aan gewerkt moet worden, nl. de financiering. De stichting Buddhavihara heeft wel een begin-fonds waaruit het pand kan worden aangekocht met een voorlopig koopcontract. De rest van het bedrag moet echter nog op tafel komen. Daarom heeft de stichting het plan geopperd om de grond zo veel mogelijk per meter te verkopen, d.w.z. een ieder die het plan wil ondersteunen kan één of meerdere vierkante meter(s) á f300,- per m kopen. Voor het overige bedrag kan een hypotheek genomen worden.
Wij rekenen op Uw hulp. Uw naam zal - als U dit wilt - gegraveerd worden in een mooie tempelplaat.
Uw financiële bijdrage kan gestort worden op één van de rekeningnummers van de stichting Buddhavihara (zie pag. 2) o.v.v. *'new temple'*.
Uw hulp wordt zeer gewaardeerd.

ใครชอบ ใครชัง ช่างเถิด
ใครเชิด ใครชู ช่างเขา
ใครเบื่อ ใครบ่น ทนเอา
ใจเรา ร่มเย็น เป็นพอ

ญาณสิทฺธิ



a photograph of the new house.

INTERVIEW WITH THE VEN. P.K.K. METTAVIHARI

abbot of the Buddhavihara-temple in Amsterdam, August 19th 1991.

Q. Can you tell us something about your youth and how you became a monk?

A. Yes. I was born in a Buddhist family in Eastern Thailand and when I was a boy I was interested in the Buddha statue. I didn't even know what Buddha meant at that time but every time I went to the temple I saw the statue and I liked to be like that man sitting in the meditation posture of that Buddha statue. I sat there for maybe half an hour or more, I do not remember. But I know that a few times I disappeared from home and went to the *Wat* (the temple) and sat in front of the Buddha, alone. My sister then looked for me and would find me sitting there and brought me back home each time. And then, when I had grown up somewhat, I went to school and did not have so much time.
But most mornings I liked to give food to the monks when they came for almsround or *pindapata* so that I practised *dana* (giving) when I was a little boy, almost every morning.
Then I became a student in secondary school and when I was 14 there was a summer ordination ceremony to become novice so I joined the occasion, but only for temporary. But as a novice once I went to a funeral of a poor man without family, which was sponsored and organized by the temple.
His body was not in the coffin, so I saw his legs while we put dried flowers for the cremation. I was shocked that night, I couldn't sleep the whole night, a few nights. I thought *'I am going to die'*, because the picture appeared to me very strongly, what we call *marananussati:* thinking of death and also thinking of myself that I may die in the same way. At the same time I had fear for it. So I once

samanera I was convinced that it should be practised by anyone. So I tried to share that but in Thailand as a junior monk I couldn't do much, although I tried to do my best. This situation changed when I came to the West: here my position was high and independent, being the leader of the *Sangha* in Europe and in America. So I looked for the way, my own way, to spread meditation practice to Westerners as well as to Easterners.

Q. You have had a lot of experience in teaching meditation both to eastern as well as to western people. Are there any differences and things in common?

A. There is some difference between eastern and western culture, that's definite. But in human being or in mankind I don't see a difference.

Everybody likes to be happy and free from suffering but due to the culture there is a difference. Easterners like in Thailand or other Buddhist countries, practise meditation out of faith or confidence or what we call *saddha*, because of the culture in their family, in their society; they practise with respect and expectation that they can fulfill their functioning as Buddhists and also for final attainment of *Nibbana* (Enlightenment). But the Westerners who are born here, they were mostly grown up with Christian or western culture. They have a different opinion about that. So when they want to meditate they have to be convinced at first that something is benefitting them now in this life and also for the future. But most of the Easterners expect for the future, that's the difference and Westerners want to prove it now. That is also very according to Buddhism because in Buddhism we have the word *ehipassiko*, inviting you to investigate the Dhamma, to come and look, to investigate for yourself. It is open to all and this seems very agreeable with Westerners.

Q. Do you make any difference between teaching meditation and teaching Buddhism?

A. First of all I have to make it clear to everybody that when I teach Buddhist meditation I don't want to convert people to any belief or religion, even not to Buddhism itself.

The belief in something has to do with ritual practice which also hinders the progress of the meditation practice. So in my approach for the West I do not introduce any ritual practice but give them the meditation excercise and technique and let them try to practise. They don't have to call themselves Buddhists but meditators or practitioners of meditation and we don't care about whether they are Christian or Buddhist or whatever, it has nothing to do with that. It has something to do with human being, with practice. So it is open to all.

Q. Can people with a Christian belief reach to Enlightenment?

A. If they practise with proper guidance that belief cannot be a blockade but will be open. But they need to understand what they commit themselves to. That has to be cleared up in interviews with the meditation teacher.

Q. What is the benefit of doing a retreat?

A. Doing a retreat that means practising meditation for a longer term and intensively. When it is not intensive enough it is very hard to expect any good result. To be able to get that result we organize retreats for those who are interested, so they have more time to investigate themselves with the meditation practice. And after some time: at least a week, 10 days, a month or longer even, they will experience something and can really be convinced that meditation is something for them.

Q. Do you have any advice for people who practise meditation but have no time for an intensive retreat?

A. They can from time to time contact with the meditation teacher because they can get the instructions to practise less intensively at home and when they continue to practise that way then they can also obtain certain results.

Q. In the West many people are interested in and follow different types of psychotherapy. Can meditation be seen as a sort of psychotherapy?

A. To do a therapy in the West people are more concerned with 'self', I mean, I mean first I have to make it clear that to practise meditation according to the Vipassana technique has as its final goal to renounce 'self'. So it totally removes all the inner problems like lamenting, grief, despair and sorrow. All this can be

properly here so there will be a new trend here to adapt to. We are exploring on that now.

Q. I heard about your plans to move from the centre on the St. Pieterspoortsteeg to another place in the outskirts of Amsterdam. What is the reason for this?

A. The point is that here in the Sint Pieterspoortsteeg in the beginning I was alone with one attendant and also with one monk, Kirano. We were three and so the centre was of big size for us. But later on there came a lot of visitors, a lot of activities, a lot of social contacts with both Westerners and Easterners. Now the place is no longer sufficient. At the same time we like to have a permanent place.

So after all this investigation and exploring we do believe that people need to have a Buddhist centre in Amsterdam, but to keep it in the St. Pieterspoortsteeg is impossible. Here it's overcrowded with people who live here and also with a lot of tourists. We also have a problem with our visitors when they come from a far distance like from Germany or from elsewhere in Holland,they find themselves with a parking problem.

Also many times here in Amsterdam, like in all big cities, there's a lot of criminality, e.g. that the car has been damaged, that valuable things have been taken out etc. So we came to the conclusion that we should look for a proper place but that it should be very near to Amsterdam, not more than half an hour driving from the centre. Eventually we found a place in the municipality of Landsmeer, next to Amsterdam, going North from here. We are now in the process of negotiating and bargaining to settle the buying process. I hope this will be finished in a couple of weeks. So eventually, if everything is settled, we have to move after we have stayed here for nearly 6 years and we hope to move beginning next year. And the function of that centre will be that of a permanent place for all Buddhists, both Eastern and Westerners and besides that it will also be open for non-Buddhists.

Q. What kind of activities will take place in the new centre?

A. Now, on the field of meditation we have weekly meditations (see backside of the Sara) and regular weekend courses. Also we have Thai ladies living in the West who want to come here and practise their faith and devote themselves with the practice of chastity and meditation by being a *Mae Chee* or *Silacarini* for the period of a week or at least a weekend. This has to be organized in the temple, somewhere else is not acceptable or agreeable. And otherwise they just come to visit and bring us food or any necessary things that can be used for the temple and for the monks. At the same time we have the plan that a longer retreat like a 10-day course can be held in the new centre for at least 20 persons.
Besides this we have many Chinese visitors who come here to pray and to keep connection with their culture, the same with the Thais. So you can say that this is a sanctuary for all, dependent on what standard you live. But it is good anyway.

Q. What about the finances?

A. Yes, this is a question,for me too and for all those who are concerned with the organization. I have one thing in mind which I did my whole lifetime: if I am convinced that something is good, any project that is good for many people you should do it, doesn't matter how. I am convinced that although there is a heavy financial obligation and a lot of work to be done to raise funds, it is going to work even though it's very hard.

But more or less since I am here almost 20 years now, I don't think that people who are in my surrounding will neglect on that and if necessary then Westerners as well as Easterners will be going to help. 10 Days ago we made a definite decision to buy the house which will be the new temple and we have got nearly f50.000,- now donated by some of my students who are also convinced about my activities, together with Thai and Chinese supporters who came here for sanctuary. But I do not know if we can do it all for the rest of the amount that needs to be paid, which is more than f500.000,-.

So perhaps we need to go to the bank to take a mortgage for which we have some guarantors.

So anyhow we are going to make it.



BEZOEK AYYA KHEMA

Midden december zal Ayya Khema naar Nederland komen, o.a. om een meditatie-weekend in Groningen te begeleiden. Ayya Khema is Duitse van geboorte (1923) en is sinds 12 jaar ingewijd als boeddhistische non (in Sri Lanka). Ze geeft tegenwoordig lezingen en meditatie-kursussen in de USA, Australië en Europa en heeft in Duitsland een spiritueel centrum gevestigd. Naast het meditatie-weekend in Groningen (van *13 - 15 december*) zal ze *maandag 16 december* een lezing geven in Boxmeer (voor info en opgave zie telefoonnummers op de achterkant van de Sara).

Als voorproefje hebben we een stuk overgenomen uit het door haar geschreven en zeer aan te bevelen boek *'Being nobody, going nowhere'*, uitgebracht door Wisdom Publications, Boston, USA in 1987.



'THE HAPPINESS OF INSIGHT'

The greatest happiness is the happiness of insight. This is irreversible. Insight, in Buddhist terminology, is always directed towards impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self, either one of the three or all three.

If one sees one of the three characteristics clearly, then one knows all of them because they are totally interconnected. The happiness and bliss of total insight means that one has shed the burden of ego delusion. When one can let go of that, the relief and release are immense.

Ramana Maharshi, who was a sage in southern India, compared ego delusion to people taking a train journey.
They enter the train and stand in the aisle holding on to their luggage instead of putting it in the luggage-rack and letting the train carry it.

Like this we carry the burden of ego around with us when we need not. Ego delusion makes everything seem to be threatening or attacking us, or occasionally defending us, difficult to master, an obstacle, like a mountain which has to be climbed. It can make life look quite difficult...

The mind that has become concentrated, happy and peaceful is a mind that can accept this constantly changing universe and use it for its own benefit. The mind that is not peaceful rejects such reality out of hand and says 'But I want to be happy.' That's the mind of most people in the world. The mind which doesn't need any outer conditions for happiness is the mind that can say 'This is the release from all suffering. This is true happiness.'

Such a mind sees with clarity the absolute reality of what's happening in this universe and doesn't have to hang on to anything, attach to anything, doesn't have to become anything, doesn't have to be anything. It just does what is necessary at each particular moment and then lets go.
The happiness of insight is not exhilaration or elation. It's the sort of happiness which has peacefulness as its base and a lack of desire, striving and delusion as its result. When delusion is gone, the pure bright mind knows only that which is real.



THAISE LES

Midden september zullen er ('s avonds en overdag) weer Thaise lessen worden georganiseerd. In Amsterdam e.o. zullen de lessen verzorgd worden door *khun Chutima (020-6736279)*, in Groningen door *khun Nongyao en Jan Boekesteyn (050-776886)* en in Apeldoorn door *khun Bansri (055-670488)*.

Een ieder is van harte welkom en kan zich aanmelden via bovenstaande telefoonnummers.